

Serial No. 09/571,803
Attorney Docket No.: 006593-1863
Amendment

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Amended
present invention tightens the belt 30 to a specified tension without requiring the use of gauges or other special tools, and the belt tensioning device 11 need only be assembled in the above-described manner to ensure that the belt 30 is properly tensioned. Furthermore, the spring 46 of the present invention is located between the wall 38 and the washer 50. Because the wall 38 is a fixed component, the belt tensioning device 11 provides a high degree of control over the spring deflection, and thereby the tension in the belt 30. Additionally, the belt tensioning device 11 minimizes bending moments in the system.

In an alternate embodiment, as shown in Fig. 9, the arm 32 may comprise a variety of lever arms (e.g. 90, 92) to change the leverage of the arm 32 on the rotation of the motor 20 (and thereby optimize the force on the belt 30), or to change the moment arm ratios in the system. Furthermore, a variety of lever arms may be used to change the rotation of the motor 20; that is, a lever arm may be provided to rotate the motor in the opposite direction of arrow A when the nut 42 is tightened down.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 3, 10, 17, 19, 21 and 22 such that they read as follows:

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3. (Twice Amended) The slicer of claim 21 wherein said pulley is located adjacent to said anchor component which has an opening formed therein, and wherein said rod extends through said opening.

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10. (Twice Amended) The slicer of claim 21 wherein said rod slidably extends through said spacer.

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17. (Twice Amended) The slicer of claim 16 wherein said rod is a threaded rod and said member is a nut threaded onto said rod.

19. (Amended) A slicer comprising:

a slicer body having an anchor component;
a rotatable blade coupled to said slicer body;
a reciprocal tray for bringing a food product into and out of contact with said

B6 5 blade;

a motor for driving said blade, said motor being pivotable and having an output pulley operatively connected to said blade; and

a belt tensioning device for said motor such that a belt passed around said output pulley can be tightened to a predetermined tension, the belt tensioning device including a threaded rod coupled to said motor, said rod being located adjacent an anchor component, a nut threaded onto said threaded rod, a spring located adjacent said nut that exerts a reactive force against said nut when said nut is threaded in a first direction along said rod to cause said motor to pivot, and a spacer which interacts with said nut and said anchor component to limit advancement of said nut in said first direction, and wherein said anchor component remains fixed when said motor pivots.

21. (Amended) A slicer comprising:

B7 a slicer body having an anchor component;
a rotatable blade coupled to said slicer body;
a reciprocal tray for bringing a food product into and out of contact with said blade;
a motor for driving said blade, said motor being pivotable and having an output pulley operatively connected to said blade; and

a belt tensioning device for said motor such that a belt passed around said output pulley can be tightened to a predetermined tension, the belt tensioning device including a rod coupled to said pulley, a member coupled to and movable along said rod, a spring that exerts a reactive force against said member when said member is moved in a first direction along said rod, and

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- ✓ a spacer which interacts with said member and said anchor component to limit advancement of said member in said first direction, and wherein said anchor component remains fixed when said motor pivots.

22. (Amended) A slicer comprising:

a slicer body;

a rotatable blade coupled to said slicer body;

a reciprocal tray for bringing a food product into and out of contact with said blade;

a motor for driving said blade, said motor being pivotable and having an output pulley operatively connected to said blade; and

a belt tensioning device for said motor such that a belt passed around said output pulley can be tightened to a predetermined tension, the belt tensioning device including a rod, an arm coupled to said pulley, said arm being movable along said rod, a spring that exerts a reactive force against said arm when said arm is moved in a first direction along said rod, and a spacer which interacts with said arm to limit advancement of said arm in said first direction.

Add the following new claims:

23. The slicer of claim 21 wherein said spring is a coil spring.

24. The slicer of claim 21 wherein said spacer is trapped between said anchor component and said member when said spacer limits the advancement of said member in said first direction.

25. The slicer of claim 22 wherein said spacer is slidable along said rod.

26. The slicer of claim 22 wherein said spacer receives said spring therein.

27. The slicer of claim 22 wherein said spring is a coil spring.

28. A slicer comprising:

a slicer body;

a rotatable blade coupled to said slicer body;

a reciprocal tray for bringing a food product into and out of contact with said blade;

a motor for driving said blade, said motor being pivotable and having an output pulley

operatively connected to said blade; and

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a belt tensioning device for said motor such that a belt passed around said output pulley can be tightened to a predetermined tension, the belt tensioning device including a rod coupled to said pulley, a member coupled to and movable along said rod, a spring that exerts a reactive force against said member when said member is moved in a first direction along said rod, and a spacer which interacts with said member to limit advancement of said member in said first direction, wherein said spacer slidably receives said rod therethrough.

29. The slicer of claim 28 wherein said spacer receives said spring therein.

30. A slicer comprising:

a slicer body;

a rotatable blade coupled to said slicer body;

a reciprocal tray for bringing a food product into and out of contact with said blade;

a motor for driving said blade, said motor being pivotable and having an output pulley

operatively connected to said blade; and

a belt tensioning device for said motor such that a belt passed around said output pulley can be tightened to a predetermined tension, the belt tensioning device including a rod coupled to said pulley, a member coupled to and movable along said rod, a spring component that